

Washington State SERVICE CORPS

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT

Hot! Hot! Fire!

*by Kali Ann Kotsar, Intermountain AmeriCorps
Service & Education Team*

When I first became a Washington Service Corps member, I didn't know what kind of a contribution I could make. Working in a small school, I thought that I could be a positive influence to maybe a few kids.

But I learned one of the magical things about doing public service: by reaching out to a few, you can reach many.

I serve at a Head Start satellite office in East Wenatchee. My role is to expand the current health and dental curriculum and help implement our "I am Moving, I am Learning" health program. This program addresses childhood obesity in Head Start children.

For my very first lesson with the children, I played a game that got them moving and learning about fire safety. I laid out three jump ropes, which they jumped over (practicing motor skills) yelling, "Hot, hot fire!" The movement and words remind children that fire is hot.

Next, I set out two cones where they were to "Stop, drop and roll" (also helps with motor skills) to put out any fire that might be on their clothing or body. Last, two teachers held a white blanket low to the ground and waved it to represent smoke, and the children had to crawl under and out the door to safety. This exercise taught them that smoke rises and will make it hard to breathe.



East Wenatchee Head Start children learn about fire safety.

The teacher at the satellite enjoyed this activity so much that when she had firemen come to the class, she had the children demonstrate what they had learned. The firemen liked the activity so much, they are now using the same lesson to teach other children they visit.

I was amazed that the very first lesson I developed could have such a positive effect on the community. Now, other children in the East Wenatchee community are learning about fire safety in a physically active, healthy way.

My success in the classroom has given me the confidence to pursue other ideas and the desire to contribute more to my community -- two more magical things about doing public service.

Contact: Terri Jack, 360-486-5907

